



Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mel Karpenko named 2023-2024 Ontario Queen of the Furrow

DUFFERIN COUNTY, Ontario (September 23, 2023) - In a celebratory evening that saw the top competitive plowmen awards handed out, it was also the night when the new Ontario Queen of the Furrow was crowned—and it was local representative Melissa (Mel) Karpenko who was named to the unique honour.

A graduate of the University of Guelph with a Human Kinetics degree, she has worked with Corteva Agriscience and BASF Canada and is currently in her final year at Western University in the nursing program. She plans to work locally as a Registered Nurse upon graduation. Karpenko was raised in Caledon and currently lives on dairy goat farm in Dufferin County.

First runner up was Jacquelyn Easson of Haldimand-Ontario, with Annie Watson of Elgin named as second-runner up.

Karpenko was also named Miss Friendship by her fellow competitors and placed second in the plowing competition, while Watson took top spot in the plowing competition with Easson placing third.

Rounding out the top five in the plowing competition were Shayna Morphy of Wellington, fourth; and Lambton County's Morgan Rombouts placing fifth.

Other representatives in the competition included Hanna van Stuyvenberg of Bruce County, Meghan McLeod of Durham, Abby Reed of Hastings, Elizabeth Dowdall of Lanark, Regan Carkner representing Leeds, Rhianna Gallagher of Ottawa-Carleton and Janet Bruce of Oxford Blenheim.

The evening is also a wonderful chance for many former Ontario Queen of the Furrows to return for the crowning and re-connect with the close-knit plowing community.

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Former Ontario Queen of the Furrow Lynne (Stewart) Moore, crowned at the 1977 IPM, then known as the International Plowing Match and Farm Machinery Show in Frontenac County made a brand-new, first-time special presentation to Karpenko, in honour and tribute to Spencer and Kay Wilson of Norval. Spencer was Moore's plow coach and Kay invaluable support throughout her time as a Queen of the Furrow for Halton County, which is where the Wilson's were from. In fact it was an address to the Ontario Plowmen's Association (OPA) convention in 1959 by Kay that inspired the formation of the Ontario Queen of the Furrow competition and all these many years later, the program continues.

But for former Ontario Queen of the Furrow Elisabeth Barker MacMillan, it was a particularly special reunion. Barker was crowned 60 years ago at the plowing trifecta—an IPM, a Canadian Plowing Match and a World Plowing Match—held on the Highway 10 Caledon farm of Conn Smythe in 1963, just 25 minutes south of this year's match. Travelling all the way from Nova Scotia with her son for this year's match, she said she didn't want to miss this anniversary moment. "It chased us out of the Maritimes," said MacMillan, referring to post-tropical storm Lee which has left a trail of destruction on Canada's east coast.

As the evening wound up Karpenko expressed her gratitude to the many people who have provided help, assistance and support during the past year, describing the experience of representing the IPM host county as "memorable".

"(It) allowed me so many additional opportunities to promote the tradition of plowing and the value of the agriculture industry. Above all, I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to meet so many new people, each sharing their stories of past matches, the brotherhood and camaraderie that is interwoven within the tradition of plowing," she said.

Karpenko will now spend the next year travelling the province acting as an ambassador for Ontario Agriculture and the OPA—the parent host of the IPM—and attending events to promote next year's IPM being held in Lindsay, Kawartha Lakes from Tuesday, October 1 through Saturday, October 5, 2024.

Photos available upon request.



Mel Karpenko, left with outgoing Ontario Queen of the Furrow Maranda Klaver.



Left to right: Jacquelyn Easson, Mel Karpenko, Maranda Klaver and Annie Watson

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An annual Celebration of Excellence tradition—the group photo of former Ontario Queen of the Furrows in attendance for the crowning of the new representative.

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About

The International Plowing Match and Rural Expo (IPM)

The International Plowing Match will take place from September 19 to September 23 in Bowling Green (between Grand Valley and Laurel) in Dufferin County, Ontario. The IPM is a five-day celebration of agriculture and rural living. There will be plowing competitions, a range of activities for people of all ages, numerous opportunities to learn about agriculture, daily live entertainment in multiple match venues, hundreds of vendors and exhibits, a wide variety of food, an RV park and more. The event has an expected attendance of approximately 70,000 people. For more information: www.plowingmatch.org/ipm2023.

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The Ontario Plowmen's Association (OPA)

The Ontario Plowmen's Association is the parent host of the International Plowing Match. Each year the OPA partners with a community to organize and host the International Plowing Match and Rural Expo. For more information please visit www.plowingmatch.org.

Dufferin County

Planning a trip to the IPM and looking to explore Dufferin County? Whether a resident or a visitor, Dufferin has something for everyone, and you can find all the area's best local offerings in the Explore Dufferin Guide! The Guide features Dufferin's "Don't miss list", day trip itineraries for visiting and local tourists, an events listing and information on local amenities and services like parks, recreation centres, libraries and more. View the Guide here: <https://tinyurl.com/8pbmtp29>.

The Township of Amaranth

The Township of Amaranth is proud to have partnered with the 2023 International Plowing Match in hosting this iconic event, celebrating agriculture, rural traditions, and community spirit. During your visit to Amaranth, we extend our warmest welcome and invite you to explore and discover the deep-rooted ties to our rural heritage and robust agricultural sector. To learn more about our township, please visit our website at www.amaranth.ca or stop by our booth, we are eager to share details about our wonderful home.

The Town of Grand Valley

The Town of Grand Valley is thrilled to be a co-host community of the 2023 International Plowing Match in Bowling Green, Ontario. As a community with strong connections to our rural heritage and agricultural sector, Grand Valley invites you to explore what we have to offer when you visit the Plowing Match. For more information about our Town, please visit www.townofgrandvalley.ca.

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*Scan for more IPM 2023
details*